

15 JULY 1965

Soc 4-01.1 VS (Edit. Opin.)

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ORG 1: OAS

The Question of Cuba

When this newspaper was on the eve of its first appearance, a Latin Americanist attending a meeting on hemisphere problems organized by the venerable American Academy of Political and Social Sciences at Philadelphia said to one of our editors:

Well, I hope the paper won't make a career of 'liberating Cuba'."

What the observation meant was that the cause of Cuba can become an obsession.

Like any other obsession, this one can warp vision and obscure reality for a Latin American specialist. It can crowd out other facts, trends, and events of importance in the great, restless region known as Latin America.

The Latin American Times' reaction to the above is this; If the activities of one daily newspaper were all that is necessary to free the people of Cuba, it would be well worth doing. But we do not believe that this paper alone or any other publication by itself can pry the yoke of Russia off the Cuban neck.

We are also very much aware that some of the most distinguished specialists in our field have materially reduced their usefulness by allowing their interest in Cuba's fate to reach an obsessive pitch.

But this newspaper is aware of another danger, that of the other extreme. What can happen when the fear of becoming obsessed with Cuba itself becomes a sub-obsession was graphically illustrated at the American Academy of Political and Social Science's recent meeting.

On the very same day when the Latin Americanist said he hoped The Latin American Times would not make a life's work of "freeing Cuba," four experts on hemisphere relations made major addresses to an assembly of some 300 highly qualified listeners. And none of the four mentioned Cuba.

Latin America's need for agrarian reform was discussed without any reference to the Cuban experience.

Latin American development was discussed without taking into account anything that we might learn from Castro's regime, whether positive or negative.

Latin Americanist said he hoped The Latin American Times would not make a life's work of "freeing Cuba,"

discussed without any consideration of their increased importance in face of the Soviet presence in Cuba.

Political parties in the hemisphere were discussed with only one passing reference to the communist parties as being "small."

This was not done because of limitations set by the host academy. Nor did the speakers represent any one political point of view.

Obviously, going to this extreme in the exploration of hemisphere relations is as erroneous as becoming obsessed with Cuba.

Castro is in Cuba, a Russian garrison is there, and a historic political and economic story is unfolding there. The Organization of American States has issued a number of reports substantiating in detail the fact that subversion out of Cuba is affecting almost every country in Latin America.

The United States government has released details of Castroite involvement in the Dominican explosion.

Obviously, Latin America cannot be discussed or reported on in a balanced and informative fashion without giving Castro's Cuba its place in the drama. The Latin American Times indeed will not allow the so-called "exile psychology" to dominate it. But we will not ignore Cuba.

Elsewhere on this page appear two revealing articles in the Cuban area. One tells of the views of communist economists from Eastern Europe who have had a glimpse of Cuban realities.

The other, by the distinguished Cuban who was his country's first president after Batista fled, gives a glimpse into the thinking of some Cuban exile leaders.

One Czech economist found the realities of Cuba under Castro entirely different from the propaganda line preached while Castro was consolidating his power. And he found them so overwhelming that he goes against the propaganda line itself in his judgments.

The Cuban exile leader's thoughts are understandably bitter. Even so, we feel he has a right to speak them.

The two articles together make a commentary on the Cuban situation that points a moral. We feel the moral is that we must not let the propaganda line dominate our thinking. We underline it.

(NOT PUBLISHED)